1:Gallin E-4,5 (1957-1958) 1966
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If, however, the water level is low and/or the field surface high, the water must be pumped into the field with a foot treadle waterwheel, usually operated by one to three people at a time.

The irrigation water is fed into the many fields which receive it on a rotation system. The fields nearest to the water source receive the water earliest. Thus, when the first water gate in the irrigation canal is closed, the water is diverted into the irrigation ditches and flows into the adjacent area; the flow of water below this water gate is practically stopped. The water in these irrigation ditches is received first by the land closest to the water gate. In each small area the narrow irrigation ditch is blocked with an earth dam which diverts the water into the fields. When the fields are sufficiently flooded, the dam is opened and the water proceeds through the irrigation ditch to the next small dam, where it is again diverted into the fields. When all the fields in the area have been flooded, the first water gate on the canal is opened, and the water flows on through the canal until it reaches the next closed water gate, which again diverts it into the ditches and to the fields. So the rotation system continues down the line, with the land furthest from the water gates and irrigation ditches receiving the water last.

Under such a system, if there is a water shortage the areas nearest the water gates and dams have the best chance of receiving an adequate water supply. The farmers call this area the "water head." The area most distant from the water gates and dams is known as the "water tail." Farmers whose fields must wait until the last for water usually suffer from an insufficient water supply for their crops, especially for rice.

Even if there is not a water shortage, the farmers who cultivate fields in the water tail normally plant their rice later than the farmers in the water head, which creates a natural staggering of the planting and harvesting in the area. However, when there is a water shortage, it is often necessary, especially for the farmers in the water tail, to delay the transplanting of the rice seedlings and sometimes even to substitute another crop. Most of the land tilled by the Hsin Hsing villagers is in the water tail, and during the course of the research period it was common to see plowed fields waiting for weeks to be flooded or to see rice withering in the dry and cracking soil. As a result frequently the rice production of the area is disappointingly small, and the water problem is a constant concern of the villagers, even the young children. Water and the coming of water is often the main topic of conversation for weeks on end.

Sometimes the water problem becomes so grave that farmers may resort to "stealing water," secretly opening a water gate or an earthen dam in an irrigation ditch so that they can obtain their water out of

1:Gallin E-4,5 (1957-1958) 1966
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turn and ahead of time. Frequently, when this or some other form of stealing water occurs, there is physical violence. Since a concentration of fields in a small area is likely to be cultivated by farmers from several villages, violence between individuals often causes animosity between villages.

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Sometimes when the water supply is short, it is very late in coming through the irrigation canals to the Hsin Hsing area because it is being held up at a gate in the water head area. If this creates an emergency, equipment is brought in to pump the water directly from the river into the canal and then into the ditches of the area. The operation of this pumping equipment is almost entirely paid for by the Water Conservation Association, but at the same time, part of the expense of maintaining the pumps must usually be borne by the farmers of that area.

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When a serious water shortage occurred in 1958, it was after many requests by the farmers of the area and through the efforts and influence of their small water unit chief, a rich landlord, that pumps were finally brought in. However, instead of the pumps being installed immediately, problems developed which delayed their use for several days. Those farmers who were mainly from one village with land in the water head declared that they would not participate in paying the extra costs of operating the pumps. This unusual noncooperative attitude was the result of bad *kan-eh'ing* between themselves and the farmers from other villages over the election of the small water unit chief.

The farmers with fields in the water head were receiving what little water was coming through the system. In addition, when the pumps brought in more water, these farmers felt free to continue to use the water since it ran through public ditches. Therefore, the farmers with fields toward the water tail decided that they too would refuse to pay for the pumping so long as the people in the water head were taking the water without paying for it. They also felt that by the time the water reached the water tail under the normal rotation system it would be too late to be of use. Therefore, they insisted that everyone, including the farmers of the water head area, share in the costs of pumping and also that the normal rotation order under which the water tail received the water last be changed. Since most of the water coming through the irrigation system would be pumped into it, they insisted that all the farmers draw lots to determine the order of rotation. Because the villages of the water head refused to participate in any such arrangement, the Water Conservation Bureau office and the local police were asked to settle the dispute. These officials agreed in this instance that the rotation order should be determined by drawing

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lots. However, the farmers of the water head area still refused to take part, and the Water Conservation Bureau and the police who had been requested to intervene then told the farmers to mediate the dispute themselves.

Dependence upon mediation as a primary solution to all disputes seems to be as common in rural Taiwan today as it has traditionally been. The reason for this is that rural people usually do not wish to become involved with the authorities and so seek to mediate most problems among themselves. The person who immediately takes a dispute to the authorities is considered unreasonable. If the problem is recognized as being severe, and it does become necessary to take it to the authorities, too often they—including the police, courts, and local civil officials—do not wish to become involved in local problems. Involvement costs them time and trouble and may mean making enemies. Therefore, wherever it is at all possible, the authorities insist that the disputants mediate their own problem.

However, in the mediation of disputes, one of the disputants not uncommonly has an advantage, simply because he is more powerful, that is, has more prestige, money, and influence. Although the idea of reasonableness of disputants' demands is inherent in the concept of mediation, such a powerful disputant is not likely to be particularly reasonable in his demands for settlement.

This was the case in the above mentioned irrigation problem. Obviously, in order to change the rotation order successfully, all farmers concerned had to be in unanimous agreement. However, the farmers in the water tail area could do little to force the issue, since the farmers in the water head area had nothing to gain by cooperation. Finally, as the situation became critical, the pumps were put into operation by the small water unit chief and his assistants in order to try to save the rice crops. The allocation of the excess expenses for operating the pumps was left for a later decision.

While for the most part the public irrigation system runs smoothly as long as there is enough water, there are occasions where a lack of cooperation upsets the operation of the system and the fair distribution of water to all. There have been a few occasions when several men from a large village in the water head area opened the dam on the river so that little water flowed into the canal and down to the water tail. They did it simply to make it easier to catch fish. This demonstration of complete lack of social responsibility toward their fellows was condemned by all the villagers whose fields were affected by the cutoff of the water supply. However, the villagers of the water head area, who were not affected, did not actively censure their fellows even though they did not condone the act. The apparent lack of concern for the welfare of people of another area is not unusual. In this case the

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structure of their ideal is complete. Instead of housing a single, united family, the wings are filled with independent units, each with its own stove, each having broken from the main family at the time of a brother's marriage or a father's death. Instead of a large house, the structure can only be properly described as a compound, for in some of the older houses the families are related to each other only three or four generations back. Two families have kept the ideal after the death of their fathers. One is a pair of surprisingly amiable brothers, both of whom work out of the village at well-paid jobs, leaving their two wives, ten children, unmarried sister, and mother in an ample village home. The two wives are so alike they could be sisters and they work together in effortless cooperation. Before we left the village, however, one of the brothers had been transferred to a town too far away to return home more than once a week. His wife, knowing only too well how much business is contracted in what might be called Taiwanese night clubs, packed up her children and the furniture of her dowry and went to join him. Although the division was made with little fuss and continued good will, it was still recognized as a "dividing of the stove." The only family still retaining the eminence of being united under one authority when we left Peihotien was that of Lim Chieng-cua. This is the family with whom we lived and about whom the rest of this book is concerned.

Lim Chieng-cua and his siblings were born and grew up in a small mud house much like their neighbors. In time a good many improvements were made in the house, but the family really wanted a new one, not additions and improvements. Lim Chieng-cua once told me, "Before we built this new house, we had a mud house with a thatch roof. Every time there was a typhoon my father and my older brother's wife and I had to stay up all night to tie the roof down so it wouldn't blow off. Oh, how badly we wanted a new house! We changed two rooms of the mud house to brick, we had a good kitchen, a room for bathing and a big wooden tub for heating bath water. We even had a hand pump and hardly anyone had a pump in those days, but our hearts weren't satisfied. Now we have a good brick house, and yet every time I see a better house, I wish we had a better one too."

It is characteristic of Lim Chieng-cua and his father that when they built their new house it was not quite like any other house in the village. It was a traditional house and in every way worthy of respect,

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Lim Chieng-cua's restlessness was expressed in several changes in the house during our stay. The first was the ceiling in the guest hall. It was followed by a gigantic electric ceiling fan which had the effect of a stationary tornado the few times it was turned on. I think the next change was the one appreciated equally by our citified cook and the women of the Lim family, all of whom hated the clumsy hand pump that was once so admired by their neighbors. The operation began with the installation of an electric pump to fill the cistern, but continued until Lim Chieng-cua had built a tank on the roof for pressure and threaded ugly, constantly clogging pipes into the family kitchen, our kitchen alcove, and the bathing room. When the system worked it was a joy, but Lim Chieng-cua soon discovered some of the handicaps of Western "conveniences." At least once a month he could be found pulling his pump apart or poking at the clogged waterpipes. This gave his neighbors small satisfaction. The last improvement—one that motivated one of the villagers to suggest that we must be paying far more rent than either we or the Lims were willing to admit—was the introduction of a Western bathtub. Until this monstrosity arrived, the bathing room had been occupied by a handsome wooden tub under which a small fire was built each evening. The water was never hot but always warm enough to be comfortable. Its operations left nothing to be desired. One stood on the brick floor and laddled water onto one's back as slowly or as rapidly as desired. The water drained across the floor into one of the gutters that ran through all of the back rooms and that was the end of it. One day the wooden tub was yanked out and in its place appeared a lizard green, pressed-stone, full-length bathtub. A hole was poked in the wall and on the other side was placed what Americans would consider an antique water heater, a round drum with space at the bottom for a small coal fire. After what I hope was an appropriately polite period of using the new bath tub, i.e., scrubbing it out, waiting half an hour for it to slowly fill, bathing, waiting ten minutes for it to empty, scrubbing it out, etc., I returned to my practice of ladling water over myself on the brick floor. Not so the rest of the family, nor, for that matter, the rest of the village. Lim Chieng-cua's latest addition became a treat among his friends, and on nights when the women of the family were feeling lavish with fuel, innumerable shining faces made the journey through our kitchen to the green bathtub.

There are fourteen permanent members of the Lim household.